Stating the Problem

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| Problem: What is? | What Should Be? | How Can it Be Documented? |
| Students with learning disabilities are receiving failing grades from regular classroom teachers. | Students with learning disabilities should be receiving passing grades from regular classroom teachers. | Documentation can be performed by either report card grades, grades on assignments and tests, or teacher/student surveys. |
| 1. |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |

Refine the Problem Statement:

Middle school students with learning disabilities are receiving failing grades on assignments and report cards from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education.

2.

3.

Planning Matrix

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| --- | --- |
| Problem  Middle school students with Learning Disabilities (L.D.) are receiving failing grades on assignments and report cards from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education. | **Goal**  Middle school students with Learning Disabilities (L.D.) will receive passing grades on assignments and report cards from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education. |
| **Evidence**   * 1. Twenty (20) of the 62 L.D. students are receiving failing grades on daily assignments and tests in one or more of their inclusion classes.   2. Thirty (30) of the 62 L.D. students complete less than half of their assigned homework.   3. Fifteen (15) of the 62 L.D. students received failing grades on their report cards in one or more inclusion classes. | **Outcomes**   * 1. Sixty (60) of the 62 L.D. students will receive passing grades (70% or above) on daily assignments and tests in inclusive classrooms.   2. Sixty (60) of the 62 L.D. students will complete an average of 75% of their homework as recorded by the regular classroom teacher.   3. Sixty (60) of the 62 L.D. students will earn passing grades on report cards (Pass/C or above) in all inclusion classes. |
| **Causes**   * 1. L.D. students appear to lack organizational skills necessary for academic success.   2. Basic skill levels of L.D. students are below average.   3. Classroom teachers do not have information necessary to make curricular or evaluative modifications.   4. Classroom teachers do not want to participate in inclusive education. | **Solutions**   * 1. L.D. students will receive direct instruction related to improving organizational skills.   2. Classroom teachers will modify evaluative expectations of L.D. students to compensate for their handicapping condition.   3. Classroom teachers will be provided in-service training on curricular modification techniques.   4. Classroom teachers will be provided with adequate support to properly facilitate the inclusion process. |

Planning Matrix

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Problem** | **Goal** |
| **Evidence** | **Outcomes** |
| **Causes** | **Solutions** |

Sample Outline

Improving the Success Rate of Learning Disabled Students Receiving Academic Instruction in Inclusive Settings at the Middle School Level

Chapter I: Proposal/Introduction

Note: Please follow the outline guidelines required by faculty (i.e., Roman numerals versus alphabetical.

Problem Statement

Middle school students with learning disabilities are receiving failing grades on assignments and report cards from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine some causes for this problem and to develop a strategy for improving the situation within a particular junior high school setting.

Description of the Community

In order to meet the needs of their special education population, certain suburban school districts in the southwestern United States have begun implementing inclusive education at the secondary level.

* 1. The community is experiencing a rapid transition from a historically agriculture-based community to an urban center.
     1. The population has increased from approximately 5,000 residents in 1980 to 50,000 residents as of January, 1995.
     2. Community demographic information identifies the reputation of its school district as a contributing factor to its rapid growth.
  2. The school district has experienced growth proportionate to that of the community.
     1. The school district is comprised of 12 elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools.
     2. The student population is approximately 15,000 children.
     3. The certified staff is approximately 950 teachers and administrators.
  3. The school district’s goals are focused on academic excellence for all students.
     1. Programs are designed to meet the needs of a multiculturally diverse society.
     2. Community involvement in education is encouraged.
     3. The district believes “all students can learn.”
     4. Life-long learning skills are emphasized.

Description of Work Setting

* 1. The research project will take place at one of the three middle schools located in this suburban community.
     1. The student population is approximately 900 students.
     2. The cultural make-up of the school is approximately 80% Anglo, 18% Hispanic and 2% African American.
     3. There are 65 special education students on this campus, 62 of which are identified as learning disabled, two2 as emotionally handicapped and one as mildly mentally retarded.
  2. The school has been practicing inclusive education for one year.
     1. All special education students receive more than 70% of their education in a regular classroom setting.
     2. All teachers are required to participate in inclusive education.
     3. Inclusive education has strong administrative support at the district and building level.
  3. All people involved in inclusive education on this junior high school campus will be participants in the research project.
     1. Sixty-two students with learning disabilities and their parents will be included in the research project.
     2. Twenty regular education content area teachers will be included in the research project.
     3. Three special education teachers and three paraprofessionals will be involved in this research project.

Writer’s Role

The writer’s role at the school is special education department chair and program coordinator for inclusive education at the junior high school level.

* 1. The writer is responsible for coordinating individual educational plans for all special education students on campus.
  2. The writer is responsible for scheduling students, teachers, and paraprofessionals associated with inclusive education classes on campus.
  3. The writer consults with regular education teachers and special educators experiencing problems in inclusive settings.
  4. The writer administers all academic achievement testing for special education referrals and re-evaluations.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem/Literature Review

Problem Description

* 1. Students with learning disabilities are receiving failing grades on assignments and report cards from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education.
  2. Students do not complete homework assignments.
  3. Students do not pass tests and classroom assignments.

Problem Documentation

* 1. Teachers and students report failing grades on daily assignments and reports cards.
     1. When interviewed, classroom and special education teachers report poor organizational skills on the part of L.D. students in inclusive classrooms.
     2. When interviewed, classroom teachers state they do not make modifications for special education students.
     3. When interviewed, parents of special education students say their children do not do homework on a regular basis
  2. A review of student report cards and progress reports indicate 20 of the 65 special education students are receiving failing grades in one or more of their inclusion classes.
     1. Teachers’ grade rosters indicate that L.D. students do not turn in homework assignments regularly.
     2. Teachers’ grade rosters indicate that L.D. students are failing in-class assignments and tests.

Literature Review

The practice of including special needs students in regular classroom settings has had limited success, to date (Janney, et al, 1995).

* 1. Special education students in inclusive settings experience failure for a variety of reasons (Janney, et al, 1995; Rainforth, 1995).
  2. Inclusive education programs at the secondary level are difficult to successfully implement (Putnam, et al, 1995; Smelter, 1994; Wigle, 1994; Vaugn, 1994).
  3. Researchers have used various methods to document the success of special needs students in inclusive settings.
     1. One study counted time spent by regular classroom teachers working with special needs students (Hollowood, et al. 1994).
     2. Surveys have been used to assess perceived success of students involved in inclusion among staff members (Putnam, et al, 1995; Rojewski, et al, 1991).
     3. Daily report cards have been used to assess student’s success in special education settings (Strukoff, et al, 1987).
  4. According to the literature, poor teacher attitudes, lack of student organizational skills and the absence of curricular or evaluative modifications were causes of student failure in inclusive classrooms.
     1. Students were more successful in classrooms where teachers had positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Putnam, et al, 1995; Janney, et al, 1995).
     2. Poor organizational skills contributed to lack of student success (Fairchild, 1987; Strukoff, et al, 1987).
     3. Curricular modifications and alternative grading strategies contribute to student success in inclusive settings (Collopy, et al, 1995; Putnam, et al, 1995; Rojewski, et al, 1991; Stainback, 1996).

Causative Analysis

There are a number of causes leading to this problem.

* 1. L.D. students do not complete homework accurately.
     1. L.D. Students appear to lack organizational skills necessary for academic success.
     2. L.D. students appear to lack study skills necessary for basic academic success.
     3. Basic skill levels of L.D. students are below average.
  2. L.D. students do not achieve passing grades on tests.
     1. L.D. students appear to lack appropriate study skills necessary for successful test taking.
     2. L.D. students have not developed sufficient test taking strategies.
     3. L.D. students may not have reading levels commensurate with tests presented by regular classroom teachers.
     4. Test anxiety is often a problem for L.D. students.
  3. Classroom teachers do not modify the curriculum to meet the individual needs of L.D. students.
     1. Classroom teachers do not have the information necessary to make necessary curricular modifications.
     2. Classroom teachers do not want to participate in inclusive education.
     3. Classroom teachers are not aware of accommodations prescribed by students’ Individual Educational Plans.
  4. Classroom teachers do not make evaluative modifications for L.D. students.
     1. Classroom teachers are not aware of the legal rights of L.D. students.
     2. Classroom teachers feel they are jeopardizing the integrity of their curriculum by making evaluative accommodations for L.D. students.
     3. Classroom teachers do not know how to make evaluative modifications for L.D. students.

Chapter III: Methodology/Outcomes and Evaluation

Goals and Expectations

The goal is that learning disabled students at the middle school level will receive passing grades from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education.

Expected Outcomes

Several specific outcomes will be achieved by Learning Disabled students involved in inclusive education.

* 1. LD students will receive passing grades on tests and classroom assignments.
  2. Sixty of the 62 L.D. students will receive passing grades (70% or above) on tests.
  3. Sixty of the 62 L.D. students will receive passing grades on classroom assignments (Pass / C or above) in all of their inclusion classes.
  4. LD students will complete homework on a regular basis.
     1. Sixty of the 62 LD students will complete an average of 75% of their homework as recorded by the regular classroom teacher.
     2. Sixty of the 62 LD students will earn a passing grade on homework assignments from all of their regular education teachers.

Measurement of Outcomes

* 1. Pre- and post-implementation scores on tests and report cards will be compared.
  2. Pre- and post-implementation interview responses will be compared.
  3. Results will be presented in graph and table form.

Analysis of Results

* 1. A t-test at the .05 level of significance will be employed.
  2. Interview responses will be evaluated using qualitative methods.

Chapter IV: Results/Solutions Discussion

Statement of Problem

Students with learning disabilities are receiving failing grades on assignments and report cards from regular education teachers involved in inclusive education.

Discussion

* 1. A number of solutions have been gleaned from the literature.
     1. L.D. students benefit from instruction in study skills and organizational techniques (Strukoff, et al, 1987; Fairchild, 1987).
        1. Students improve rate of homework completion when using a daily assignment calendar or report card (Carpenter, 1985).
        2. Students receive better grades when daily monitoring sheets are used (Fairchild, 1987).
     2. Classroom teachers will make modifications to their curriculum if given training in effective techniques (Putnam, et al, 1995).
        1. When teachers received assistance in mastering skills relevant to inclusive education, they became committed to the change (Janney, et al, 1995).
        2. Inclusion classes were viewed as more successful when classroom teachers received regular contact with special educators (Wigle, 1994; Janney, et al, 1995).
        3. Teachers will modify evaluative techniques when instructed on effective methods to do so (Carpenter, 1985).
     3. Student success rates are higher in classrooms of teachers with positive attitudes about inclusion (Putnam, et al, 1995; Vaugn, 1994).
        1. Teachers had improved attitudes towards inclusion when provided with additional support (Rainforth, 1992).
        2. Teachers had more positive attitudes toward inclusion when class sizes were reduced (Putnam, 1995; Janney et al, 1995).
     4. Student success rates in inclusive settings are greater in schools where there is strong administrative support (Janney, et al, 1995).
     5. Student success rates are higher in school districts that provide adequate financial support for the inclusion model (Janney et al, 1995).
  2. Special education students in inclusive settings experience success when teacher attitudes are positive, administrative support is strong, and instruction in study skills is provided to students.
     1. Teachers can be trained as to effective methods of working with special needs students in the regular classroom setting.
     2. Information regarding IEP mandates for individual children can be provided to classroom teachers.
     3. Students can receive training in effective study and organizational techniques.
     4. Regular support from special education staff can be implemented. (Additional funds for increased support or smaller class sizes are not available.)
     5. Strong administrative support can be utilized to encourage teacher training in effective techniques for working with special needs students.

*V. Recommendations*

Description of Selected Solutions

* 1. Several approaches to improving the success rate of special education student in inclusive settings can be realistically implemented.
     1. L.D. students will be instructed in techniques to improve organizational and study skills, including the use of daily assignment calendars and material organization.
     2. Special education staff will provide training to teachers in inclusive settings.
        1. Training will be given on effective curriculum modifications and evaluative options.
        2. Teachers will receive information condensed from each student’s IEP to aid in modification planning.
     3. Classroom teachers will receive additional support in classrooms serving special needs students.
  2. The following steps will be taken.
     1. L.D. students will receive instruction in improving organizational skills.
        1. Students will be instructed in various methods of note-taking.
        2. Students will use a daily calendar to keep track of assignments.
        3. Students will receive instruction and monitoring of notebook organization.
     2. Classroom teachers will receive instructions on effective modification techniques for L.D. students and will begin implementing these suggestions.
        1. Classroom teachers will receive information condensed from students’ IEPs mandating various modifications in curriculum and evaluation methods.
        2. Classroom teachers will adjust assignments to realistically coincide with student ability levels.
        3. Classroom teachers will receive training on various curricular modifications beneficial to L.D. students.
     3. Classroom teachers will receive additional support in inclusive settings.
        1. Teachers will be provided with assistance to complete additional clerical requirements associated with inclusive education.
        2. Special education teachers and/or paraprofessionals will attend class with each inclusion teacher at least 2 times weekly.